

Oral Questions

going to act more sensibly in the case of an eventual sale of Canadair.

Would the Minister allow Parliament, the Government of Quebec and Canadair workers to examine all possible options before a decision is made on selling Canadair?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that all representations by other levels of government, other countries or other groups interested in the eventual privatisation of Canadair will be welcome, and we will certainly give them our undivided attention.

POSSIBILITY FOREIGNERS BETTER INFORMED THAN CANADIAN
BIDDERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Government has provided no information, either to the Government of Ontario or to the workers at de Havilland, and we want to avoid this kind of situation in the case of an eventual sale of Canadair. My question is as follows: Why are the big multinationals like Boeing better informed about the facts and events than Canadian citizens and Canadian companies? Why are foreigners better informed than we are?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's premise is totally false. I have said in this House, and I say it again today, that during the past year, we have been in touch with more than 130 potential buyers, both Canadian and foreign. Those who showed an interest had access to the information required to enable them to tender an offer to the board of directors of the CDIC, as required.

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[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
GREAT LAKES CHEMICAL TOXICITY

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. The gravity of the situation is pointed out in the report just released by the Royal Society of Canada and the U.S. National Research Council. It points to the chemical toxicity of the Great Lakes as being the worst on the continent. Would the Minister admit the mistake his Government has made so far in cutting toxic research programs and reinstate the programs, and the people affected by these cuts, in this very vital area of public health?

● (1430)

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think if the Hon. Member has had a chance to read the report he will know that the authors of the report stressed

that the problems with which we are dealing go back many years. It does not have to do only with decisions made by this Government or, for that matter, by the previous Government.

Because of the urgency of the situation—and it is a sense of urgency we shared even before the publication of the report—this Government has begun to put in motion the plans which we hope to bring to Parliament early in the new year which will be the most progressive, cradle-to-grave management of toxic chemicals in the western hemisphere.

Mr. Caccia: I want to remind the Minister that we did not cut the toxic research programs whereas his Government did. Therefore he has an obligation.

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Since the report was published yesterday by prominent scientists on both sides of the border indicating the gravity of the situation, would the Minister tell us what action he intends to take?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of what action I intend to take. It is a matter of what actions I am already taking. I have met with the top representatives of all the chemical industries in the country. I have mobilized a team of people from labour, industry, and provincial officials from across the country for the purpose of putting together a regime which I think will be a credit to the Government and to the people of Canada.

We are going to revamp all of the laws within the federal Government having to do with toxic chemicals, focusing in particular on the Environmental Contaminants Act. Those amendments will be brought forward in the House before too long. I urge the Hon. Member who raised the question to get the support of his Party behind those worth-while reforms.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS

SALE OF DE HAVILLAND—WORKERS' TELEGRAM OF PROTEST

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. I have just learned that in Toronto, just before noon, over 2,000 de Havilland workers, representing one shift only, have signed a telegram addressed to the Prime Minister expressing their opposition to the Government's negotiated deal with Boeing. What this means, since it is only one shift, is that the vast majority of de Havilland workers are opposing what the Government plans to do in terms of their employment.

Given the opposition now of those workers, clearly expressed, which adds to the questions the deal, will the Minister commit himself, and the Government, to bring all the aspects of which have been raised about the financial aspects of this deal before Parliament before it signs a final agreement?